

Study on telecentres around the world

Intermediate executive summary December 7, 2009

End September 2009 a study was initiated by the Cluster Green & Connected Cities to identify and describe recent progress in urban spaces dedicated to e-activities. Between benchmark, catalog references and remarkable case studies (best practices) this study focuses on ambitious and innovative achievements in various countries.

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At the Forum meeting in Strasbourg on December 10 and 11, 2009 this intermediate executive summary gives some initial results before the final publication of the rapport scheduled for January 2009.

Methodology

The background field of study is very large thus we have privileged a methodological approach that does neither focus on exhaustive content nor on analysis but privileged description of customs, practices, infrastructure and business models in the context of innovation and sustainable development.

Typology

By focusing on supply, the services offered to users, we can distinguish multiple features that we chose to classify and group into 6 types:

1) Private Corporate Initiative, « satellite » office: Provision for the company personnel living around of a new workspace that is truly a satellite office of the company in the particular order to reduce the transportation time of its employees.

-Description of use for a typical employee : "I am an IBM employee and the new offices near Parisian suburban allow me to save time and transportation to have an efficient work space that I share with my colleagues at IBM"

2) Co-Working Space : A place located in a particular territory and intended to generate income as well as to develop social ties by hosting professionals who share the values of openness, and come to work and exchange.

-Description of use for a typical employee : "I live in downtown Paris, La Cantine is to me an appropriate solution to work collaboratively in a friendly and open environment. I go there sometimes at night to see the conferences I'm interested in "

3) Smart Work Center : A professional environment located on the outskirts of big cities that allows employees to work flexibly not far from their homes through a concept of many integrated services.

-Description of use for a typical employee : "The morning I leave my child at the SWC daycare and I meet my Japanese colleagues thanks to a tele-presence room "

4) Telecottage, initiative of the northern countries : Provides local access to computers service and the presence of facilitators. These places are designed to satisfy the needs of a community that uses it for various purposes (briefings, ICT training, professional exchanges).

-Description of use for a typical employee : "The telecottage is close to my place. I can work there from time to time but I mainly use it for my training in the use of ICTs"

5) Community Telecentre of the southern countries : Deliver basic services (word processing, printer, scanner, email, internet access) to a population that lacks Internet access, with the primary objective of simplifying lives and work. For they bring access to information and culture (library, animation team), these sites participate in local development.



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-Description of use for a typical employee : "I go to the telecentre to communicate with my family in France, to do research for my association"

6) Business Center : Rent individual offices or shared open spaces to companies in order to allow managers and teams to be directly operational. Also provides a basic administrative service.

-Description of use for a typical employee : "In my work I travel a lot, business centers allow me to always have a fully equipped office in any town I'm going. For me it is real freedom."

Early Results

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Community telecentres of the southern countries and **telecottages** are not focused on business telecommuting. They do not provide the necessary infrastructure to enable remote work performance. However, they host a rather large public : associations, families, individuals looking for training.

Co-working spaces, private corporate initiatives, business centers, and especially **Smart Work Centers** provide business solutions. They offer tools for teleworking (those offered by **Smart Work Centers** are of much higher quality) but they are not all open to the public. Obviously, **private corporate initiatives** are open to their employees only. **Business centers** and **Smart Work Centers** select their users, whereas **co-working spaces** welcome much more different users.

If one considers these centers through the prism of the 4 indexes of sustainable development: economy, environment, social and culture, one can observe that the 4 types of centers that focus on business have, unsurprisingly, a high economic index unlike **telecottages** and **community telecentres of the southern countries**.

From an environmental perspective the **Smart Work Centers** have the highest index. Indexes of other types of centers gradually decline: **private initiatives** come next, then **business centers** with a medium index, the **co-working spaces**, and finally, **community telecentres** and **telecottages** with an environmental index equal to zero.

From a social perspective, **community telecentres of the southern countries** are the best, followed by **telecottages** and **co-working spaces**. The **Smart Work Centers** have a medium environmental index whereas **private initiatives** have virtually no social offer and **business centers** don't have any.

Finally, the cultural perspective can highlight **community telecentres** and **telecottages**. **Co-working spaces** have a medium cultural index and the other two types of centers have no cultural specificity at all.

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